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SECURITY INFORMATION

REPORT

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SUBJECT Use of Forced Labor by Soviet Industry

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1. Very many industrial enterprises in the Georgian SSR have used corrective labor camp inmates as workers simply because this labor was much cheaper than that of free workers. I know that through the post World War II years the Tkvarcheli Coal Mines Trust used labor from the corrective labor camp in Kvezani, mainly on construction of roads connecting individual mines. The Kvezani Camp had as many as 1,000 convicts who, just as all convicts in corrective labor camps in the Georgian SSR, were either criminal offenders or political prisoners with short term sentences. Political prisoners with long term sentences as far as I know, were never sent to any camps located in the territory of the Georgian SSR. Almost all the convicts in the Kvezani Camp were used as laborers by the Tkvarcheli Coal Mines Trust. No women were held in this camp. The convicts never appeared by name on any enterprise records but were always requested by number. Payments to the camp were also made on the basis of the number of workers supplied by the camp, i.e., so many convicts for so many working days. I do not know how much the administration of the Tkvarcheli Coal Mines Trust paid the Kvezani Camp for the labor which was supplied. However, until 1948,

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used some German PW tailors who were kept in another Kvezani camp. For each of these laborers I had to pay the camp administration 800 rubles a month. As far as I know, only a small part of these wages, paid by the Trust to the camp, probably about 100 rubles monthly, went to the convicts; the rest was retained by the Camp's administration. I do not know how the output of prisoners compared with that of free laborers; but I believe that there was not much difference, since the convicts were interested in working outside the camp area where, if nothing else, they received better food rations and some pocket money.

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2. I know that GruzgidroStroy [redacted] used quite a number of forced labor camp inmates on several construction projects, mostly on road construction. The same was true of the Tbilisi Housing Project which used forced labor from the camps located in Avchala, Ortachala, and Rustavi, all suburbs of Tbilisi. The Rustavi foundry had used many inmates from the Rustavi Camp.
3. I believe that the number of corrective labor camp workers is now much smaller than it used to be before, during, and immediately after World War II. The worst period in this respect was during World War II and immediately thereafter until about 1949, when the number of forced labor camp inmates started to decline rapidly. An explanation for this is that in 1940 camps in the USSR were filled with convicts of the YEZHOV purge of 1937. During the war and immediately thereafter, a large number of people were sent to the camps for desertion, evasion of military service, speculations, change of employment without proper authority, fleeing from kolkhozy, and absenteeism. From 1949 on the application of many decrees pertaining to labor was not so strict any more, and the number of convicts in corrective labor camps in the USSR started diminishing.

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